

# THE STATE OF SUPPORT SERVICES FOR BABIES, MUMS AND THEIR FAMILIES IN ENGLAND



In 2016, the Unicef UK Baby Friendly Initiative launched a **Call to Action campaign** urging UK governments to take four steps to enable mothers to give their babies the best possible start, and to protect all babies from commercial interests. A key aspect of this is ensuring that breastfeeding mothers have access to consistent, face-to-face, predictable and ongoing support. To understand the level of support that families are receiving, we asked **Infant Feeding Leads** representing individual services across England to tell us about the provision in their area. 145 professionals responded from across hospital and community services. This is what they told us about the **state of support for new mums**.

## SERVICES HAVE BEEN CUT ACROSS ENGLAND:



**47%** reported cuts in **infant feeding support groups**

**28%** reported cuts in **specialist breastfeeding support**

**58%** reported cuts in **front line visits by health workers**

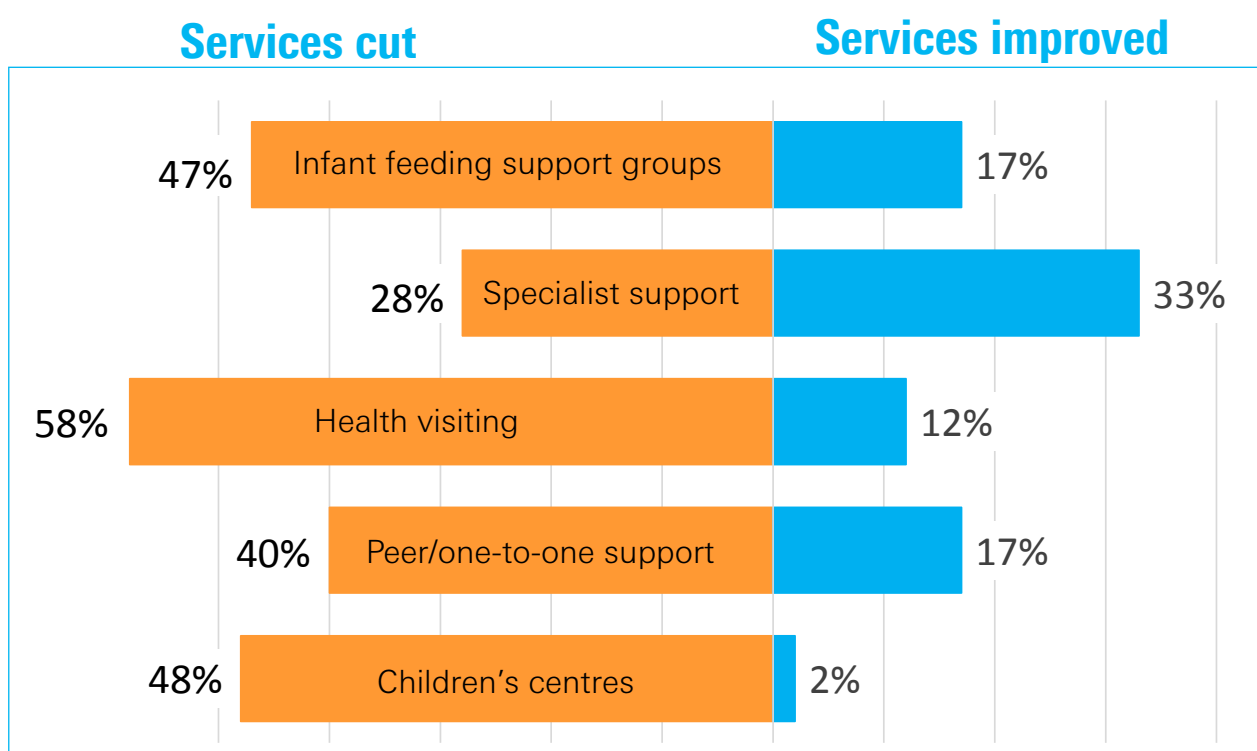
**40%** reported cuts in **peer support or one-to-one support**

**48%** reported **closure of children's centre services**

Only **12%** said that they had **not seen any cuts** in services.

## BUT THERE IS GOOD NEWS TOO:

**33%** reported improvements in specialist breastfeeding support, a key part of the Unicef UK Baby Friendly Initiative standards.



## SO, WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR MUMS AND BABIES?



**62%** reported a negative impact on **maternity services**

**35%** reported a negative impact on **neonatal services**

**71%** reported a negative impact on **health visiting services**

**71%** reported a negative impact on **children's centre services**

## CUTS MEAN:

### FEWER TRAINED STAFF TO OFFER MUMS SUPPORT

"Infant feeding posts have reduced meaning that Infant Feeding Co-ordinators are covering larger areas and unable to offer as much support."  
North West

### LESS TIME FOR STAFF TO PROVIDE INFORMATION & SUPPORT

"Midwives have more tasks to complete and less time to spend supporting women with breastfeeding issues. I feel that women do not get enough support to achieve successful breastfeeding."  
Yorks. & Humber

### FEWER PLACES FOR MUMS TO GO FOR BREASTFEEDING SUPPORT

"We have lost two baby cafés in children centres, and we had a breastfeeding team offering one to one support, which has been cut due to no further funding."  
East of England

**FIND OUT MORE:**  
[UNICEF.UK/BFICALLTOACTION](http://UNICEF.UK/BFICALLTOACTION)